

Veneris xviii die Novemb. 1698.

**I**t is Ordered at a General Meeting of the Stewards for the SOCIETY of the County of Kent, That their hearty Thanks be given to Dr. Potter, for his Sermon Preached on the 17th Instant, at St. Mary le Bow; and that He be desired to Print the same.

Robert Rowland, Treasurer.

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A  
SERMON,

Preach'd before the

Honourable SOCIETY

OF THE

N A T I V E S

OF THE

County of KENT,

Novemb. the 17th. 1698.

At St. Mary le Bow, L O N D O N.

---

By John Petter, D. D. Rector of Greens-Norton,  
in Northamptonshire, and Chaplain to her late  
Majesties Regiment of Horse, Commanded by  
the Honourable Major-General Lumley.

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L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Watkiss, for J. Bask, (Bookseller to the  
said Honourable Society,) at the Black-Boy on London-  
Bridge, 1698.

A  
SERMON

Preach'd before the

Honourable SOCIETY

OF THE

NATIVE

OF THE

County of KENT

November the 17th. 1698.

At St. Mary le Bow, L O N D O N.

By John Potter, D. D. Rector of Great-Mary-le-Bow,  
in Northamptonshire, and Chaplain to her late  
Majesties Regiment of Horse, Commanded by  
the Honourable Major-General Lumsden.

L O N D O N,

Printed by W. Child, for J. Smith, (Bookbinder)  
said Honourable Society, at the Black-Swan in  
Bridge, 1698.

TO MY MUCH  
Esteemed Country-Men,

Mr.	[Robert Rowland.	Mr.	[Matthew Tong.
	[William Baker.		[Thomas Austen.
	[John Pettet.		[Robert Smith.
	[Edward Stephens.		[Richard Watts.
	[William Pemble.		[Richard Cooke.
	[Samuel Broughton.		[Peter Weston.

STEWARDS  
OF THE.

Kentish-Feast.

Gentlemen,

YOur great readines to do the utmost  
to make the Honourable Society of  
our County both Lasting and Useful,  
was a sufficient Motive to me to contribute.  
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# The Dedication.

*all in my Power, to promote so Generous and so good a Design; and that this following Discourse, Preach'd before the same, and now made Publick at your Request, may produce these Effects, is the hearty Wish of him who will gladly Embrace any Opportunity of advancing the Honour and Welfare of our County, and of convincing you with how much Sincerity and Respect he is,*

**Gentlemen,**

*Your Faithful Friend, Af-  
fectionate Countryman,  
and Humble Servant.*

**John Petter.**

# SERMON

Preach'd at the  
Kentish-Feast.

Efay XXXII. 8.  
*But the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by  
liberal things he shall stand.*

THE Verse which I have chose for my Text, contains the Character and Reward of the Liberal Man, and ends with that part of the Chapter taken up in Prophetick Expressions of a new Government, wherein Virtue should be exalted and Piety so cherish'd and caress'd by the Favour and Countenance of the Prince, that such Men alone as were distinguishable by the rectitude and integrity of their Principles and Actions, should be advanc'd to Places of Dignity and Honour; that none but Ministers so qualified should sit at the Helm, or administer Justice to the People; and this News was so much the more joyfully receiv'd, and had this Advantage on its side, to render it acceptable and welcom, That it was predicted in *Ahaz* his time, it had his unjust Reign for a

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Foyl, to bring some new accession of Satisfaction to the whole Nation; it then felt, very sensibly felt and smarted under the Iniquity and Injustice of those who were rais'd to, and set up in Places of Honor and Trust, and for the Administration of Justice: And it was then, as the Rabbines and Commentators on this Chapter tell us, that the Prophet very seasonably, very compassionately rais'd the Spirits of the Oppressed, by foretelling them the happiness of the state they should soon be in, by intimating to them the Government of the Righteous Hezekiah, who was to succeed his Father *Abaz*, and that after the Defeat of *Senacherib*, King of *Assyria*, the Government should be so Establish'd, That Justice should thenceforth flow down like a River, that the Poor and Oppressed should be reliev'd and refresh'd, which the Prophet expresses in such Similitude and Elegancy, in such Metaphors and Schemes, and Beauties of Speech, as are convincing to shew, that plainness of Language was not sufficient to set off the energy and life of his Thoughts on this Occasion; and so you have it in the second verse of this Chapter, *And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as Rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land*: And after this he represents the happy state of Religion and Virtue, as if this change of Government should new model the very Minds of the People; so that the blind and inconsiderate, those who were unwilling to understand their own Duty, or to hearken to any Precepts concerning it, should be dispos'd to receive Instruction and new Impressions of Piety and Goodness: And in the next place, he very artfully, very rhetorically sets off the Liberal Man, by comparing him with the vile Man and the Churle, that is (as Expositors agree, and as it appears by the comparison of them with the Liberal Man) the Niggard or Covetous Wretches; to set the Liberal Man in a true light, to draw his Picture the more beautifully, he sets it off with shadows,

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even with the blackness of the Characters of the vile person and Churlie, and adds, That in the new model'd state, they should not be encourag'd, they should not be ceremoniously flatter'd nor sooth'd by the Name and Character of Liberal Men, as they were in the former Reign, and his Reason is very good, because whatever shew and colour of Religion and Justice they make, they contrive to make empty the Soul of the Hungry, and to make the drink of the Thirsty to fail: And again, *their Instruments are Evil, and they devise wicked Devices to destroy the Poor, &c. But the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand.* But as the Kings that reigned in Righteousness under the Law, shadowed forth Christ, the King of Peace, so the Virtues then recommended, had a peculiar tendency and respect to those of the Gospel; they were lame and imperfect till they grew up by degrees, 'till they were heightned and spiritualiz'd, and arrived at perfect Maturity under the Oeconomy of the Gospel; 'till Men, after some Ages of Instruction and Discipline, were refin'd and come up to the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ: Then *Liberality* wore the Name of *Charity* and the liberal and merciful Man was to receive Mercy. To do right therefore to the Text, in the sence of the and Law Gospel, as well as to the Occasion of this present Assembly.

I shall shew, *First*, what Obligations lye on us all to be Liberal and Charitable.

*Secondly*, How advantageous and necessary it is that persons of Rank and Quality, and Fortune, should distinguish themselves in this respect.

*Thirdly*, What a vast Improvement of this Grace it is to devise Liberal Things, by entering into *SOCIETIES*.

*Fourthly and Lastly*, The Reward of the Liberal Man, by liberal things he shall stand; or, in the Gospel sence, the merciful man shall receive mercy.

But before I speak to these Particulars, I think it may not be improper to premise these two things:

1st. To shew what *Liberality* is.

2dly. What it is to devise *Liberal Things*.

Now *Liberality* is a Communication of what we have to others, either for the benefit of their Souls or Bodies, or both.

2dly. To devise *Liberal Things*, is to study and consider what *Liberality* is, and what *Liberal Things* are to be done, and to conclude that we will do them; for thus much the Original Word signifies, it denoting Counsel and Deliberation, and Conclusion upon Premises.

Having thus laid down these things, I shall proceed to speak to the Particulars before-mentioned, and shew,

1. What Obligations lye on us all to be *Liberal* and *Charitable*; and this we are oblig'd to,

*First*, From Instinct and meer animal Motion.

*Secondly*, From Reason.

*Thirdly*, From Revelation.

*Fourthly*, From the Example of Christ.

1st. We are oblig'd to be *Charitable* from Instinct and meer animal Motion.

Pity and Compassion are so interwoven with our temper and constitution, that Nature must suffer no small violence to divest it self of the native softness with which it was born; when we see our Brother in distress and in labour, we naturally sympathize, as if we would lessen the burthen, by dividing the weight and bearing a share in it. I can't say whether our tenderness can easily resist, sure I am, uncorrupted Nature can't but be touch'd and mov'd when such Objects present themselves, it seems to be made to go Mechanically, like some Machines, that move the better by the greater weight: when we see Humanity and our own Nature

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ture sinking under the pressure, 'tis but relieving our selves to help and raise it up; we our selves suffer in Effigie, we rise and spring against the weight, and are mightily eas'd at the unburthening of another. We are impelled by an in-born desire of bringing Nature to the Primitive Level, and as we feel a certain pleasure at the lowering of the proud and haughty, perhaps, because they arrogate and usurp Superiority, and get so very much beyond the equality of state wherein we were created; so are we in trouble and distress at the sinking of others so much below that level and condition; so that to succour those that are in Want, to feed the Hungry, and cloath the Naked, is to redeem them from the Miseries the Fall of *Adam* has plung'd them into; 'tis in a manner to re-establish them in their Original state, 'tis as much as in us lies, to take away all Wants, Infirmities and Diseases, and to induce a sort of Immunity from them; 'tis exempting for a time from Death here, as a certain pledge and earnest of an Immortality hereafter. And if we are carried by a natural impulse, and desire to propagate our Kind, and to love and fancy what we have, as it were thus created. Is it not a God-like action, to preserve and support this Species and Image of God and our selves, and to love and admire the Mirror and Similitude of our own Natures? this is a sort of selfishness, it naturally arises from the affection we bear to our selves, 'tis gratifying our own Inclinations, 'tis aspiring after Immortality, and desiring to perpetuate our own being in some moving Image, and to live still in the Persons of others; and this principle is so common, that I venture to say, we are acted and moved by it as meer Animals. Children, e're they arrive at maturity, e're their weak glimmering light of Reason can direct them, e're they grow up to the age and capacity of Instruction, before they can imbibe the rudiments of their Duty, are touch'd with a sense of Misery, and seem to be tenderly and compassionately affected: When they breath only the life of

Animals,

Animals, they seem to be grated on, and offended at the Miseries and Pains of another, and their Spirits and tender parts seem to feel more sensibly, to receive the Impression more easily than others: and perhaps for the same reason that Women, whose Blood is more purified, and consequently their Spirits more refin'd and more active than those of Men, are more capable of Compassion and Pity; and I doubt not to say, that as these Passions and Affections are real, not only the shadows of such affections in these, neither are they only such in Children, or other Animals. But

*Secondly*, When our Spirits grow strong enough to bear up the weighty Thoughts of Reason and Goodness, when they have learn'd to perform their functions readily, and to run in their Channels easily, and when we are instructed to make reflections clearly, then the Sense of having done good, of having answered the end of our Creation, and acted according to the good inclinations planted in our Natures, is a perpetual entertainment to us; a pleasure not like that of the Body, which is gross and heavy, this indeed may tickle the Fibres and endings of the Nerves, the conveyers of Sensation, but we must at length proceed to a dull repetition of the same things, and then they become flat and familiar, and can't surprize nor sooth any more; our sensories are wearied with the active pleasure, and then they require their refreshment and motion of restitution; but the pleasure of the Mind is a pleasure that never cloyes, 'tis like that of Heaven, that is manly and rational, and lasting too; for that that pleases true Reason once, pleases it for ever, there is that satisfaction, delight, and content in the review, and memory of good actions; there is that harmony, proportion, and beauty in them as they are govern'd by right reason, that we cannot but approve the fair picture, we cannot but cast some glances of Honour on our selves, for having acted according to the dictates and directions of our most refined faculties, and divine principles; and this pleasure is as much tran-

standing that of the Body, as Reason is above Sense, or Man  
 Superior to a Beast; and our complacency in, and love of  
 this beauty of Holiness is as inseparable from us, as the love  
 of Reason, or Wisdom, or of any other perfection; and this  
 Satisfaction is so natural, that a Man may as soon quit his  
 Nature and Reason, as be displeas'd with any of these beau-  
 ties of the Mind; and the more we view them, the more we  
 love them; and the more we love them, the more we de-  
 light in them; and the more we are delighted in them, the  
 more frequent are we in viewing, and in loving, and in be-  
 ing delighted at new. And this cheerfulness of the Mind, like  
 that of Heaven has a very propitious influence on our lower  
 Nature, on the Earth and Body we wear; the complacency  
 of the Mind keeps the Spirits in an uniform, regular motion,  
 and our pleasure like that of Health, is calm and sweet:  
 But when this Heaven within us reflects on us more favour-  
 ably, when it shines more serene and clear, the very Body  
 receives new warmth and vigour, the Spirits swell up, and  
 flow more briskly, the Blood is exalted and purified by this  
 new heat and motion, and the whole Man shines with a  
 fresh Air and Gayety, the Body is so closely tackt to the  
 Mind, that they immediately affect each other, and the  
 Mind draws up a Contagion and Vapour from our lower  
 Nature that mightily disturbs it, and when the disorder and  
 disease of the Body rises higher, and does discompose the  
 upper Man, and when the Distemper and Passions of it does  
 overcast and darken our Reason and Understanding, the  
 Mind returns the Malignity in an ill aspect on the Body, as  
 the Vapour and Venom exhal'd in some Climates from an  
 unwholesome Soil, falls again in deadly Showers upon it. In  
 short, the Body looks fresh or withered, gay and lively, or  
 dull and unactive, as the Mind shines or lowers upon it. So  
 that the approbation of the Spirit does cheer and quicken the  
 Body, it communicates new Life and motion to it. Since  
 therefore we are carried by instinct, and by our meer ani-

mal motion and tendency to Compassion and Pity, or to raise and assist our own drooping Natures in the Persons of others, as I have shew'd, and that besides this Inclination and Byass impress'd upon us, we have the dictate of reason, and the cheerful reflection of the Mind, which spreading new pleasure upon us at the review of our good actions, re-inspires anew, and heighten the quickness and life of the Body, and to make it go on easily and with pleasure, because we have both these advantages on our side, we are oblig'd on a double account, not only to exercise acts of Compassion and Goodness, but to make a mighty advance in them. When wise Men advise how to make a Progress in any Science, or Art, or Calling, they often consider and study the genius and tendency of the Man's temper, that they may apply him to that which he is most strongly byass'd and inclin'd to, not doubting but that he will go on more smoothly, when he goes along with the grain of his Nature; the pleasure he finds in following his own fancy and humour, makes him apply more closely, and the difficulties he meets with, do but whet his desire, and make him pursue his Business with more appetite and keenness than before; and this is such an advantage as a Man would wish for, to attain to a dexterity and perfection in any thing: Since therefore we have these Advantages and Inclinations rooted in our Natures, not only as we are Men, and endued with Reason, but as meer Animals; how strongly are acts of Mercy and compassion enforc'd upon us; nay what a mighty proficiency may justly be expected from us herein; and therefore if we do violence to these Principles, if we so deprave our native tenderness, (and not only come short of that perfection that may be hop'd for from these of our Talent) and which is yet lower, not go one step or degree towards it, but which is worst of all, if we have so corrupted our own Natures, that we have acted counter to these Principles, and have hardned and contracted our Hearts so, that

our selves or a few more have engross'd all our kindness and affection ; when our covetous and penurious temper takes off from that universal tenderness we were born with, and not only so, but which was farther recommended to us by our common Reason : When the Seed sown in good Ground, is choakt up by Thorns and Bryars, and the Cares of this World, when we not only omit doing good to others, but do suffer and commit many acts of Unkindness and Oppression upon them, and are fruitful of Tares instead of that wholsom Grain which the Divine Husbandman had planted in our Natures ; when we do all this, we are liable to a complicated Guilt, to many Guilts comprized in that one, of dealing unkindly by another ; for 'tis an offence not to go on by the spring and good tendency of our lower Nature ; and when the reflections of right Reason do carry us farther, and are a new incitement to us, 'tis an offence of an higher nature, but when we do not only offer our selves this violence, when we not only omit acts of kindness and compassion, but commit their very contraries, we arrive at an high strain and pitch indeed, and this last is comprehensive of the two former, and has besides a special Malignity superadded. That saying of *Nero* in the beginning of his Reign, e're his tenderness was perverted, is remarkable. *I search, saith he, every where for some object worthy my Liberality, I take pity on the Poverty of one, I encourage the Merits of another, the Youth of one, and the old Age of another, and if I find a miserable Creature that deserves not to be holpen, I consider my self in his Person, and I solace my self in solacing him, so that there is no body I would not do good to, on the account of his being a Man, and yet this Idolater had not the Motives we have to perswade him to this Duty, he knew not that eternal Inheritance promised in lieu of that perishing Portion we exchange for it.* And now I have made it sufficiently appear, that our Reason as well as very Frame and Constitution, obliges us to be tender, compassionate and kind to others : But if we look yet farther,

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and consult *Thirdly*, Holy Writ, how closely, how inexcusably is the duty of Compassion and Charity tied upon us ! 'Tis enforc'd upon us with all the earnestness and vehemence possible ; we are allured and excited to it by sweet persuasives and endearing promises ; and lest we should not be drawn by the Cords of a Man, lest we should become infidious to our selves, and countermine our own Happiness, lest there should be base and ungenerous Men, that would not be drawn by the disinterest'd love and kindness of God, and the prospect of an undeserv'd mighty reward, God endeavours to lay an Holy force, and a kind of necessity upon them, he would awaken these by threats and menaces, assuring them that the Unmerciful shall receive no Mercy, and thus he stirs them up by hopes and fears, the Springs of Humane Actions.

Sacred Writ does thus press Charity upon us with that holy Warmth, that plainly shews the great Value of this Grace ; our good Works are there made the characteristick and mark of our Christianity and Discipleship ; as if our Initiation in Baptism, by which we have a Right to the external Privileges of the Church, were not to be nam'd when compar'd with these ; there is such a stress laid on it in the Gospel, that it seems to intimate, That the whole Process of the day of Judgment shall be grounded on this one Grace of Charity, and truly it is so recommended, that perhaps it is not altogether unnecessary to Observe, That, as the Moralists, as well as Divines agree, that the Virtues are connected and joyn'd together, so should the Graces go hand in hand ; and as you may read it in the 2d Epistle of St. Peter chap 1. *That we should give all diligence to add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity:* Here Charity finishes the Catalogue, and crowns the rest. And by *Moses* 'tis made the sum of, the Old Law, as 'tis by Christ made

made the sum of the New : the price and value of this Grace may arise, in a great measure from hence; That it gives occasion to, and is productive of several other Virtues ; it gives an Opportunity to the Poor that are reliev'd, not only to pray, but to praise God for their Benefactors. An act of Charity seems also to be an act of Faith and relyance on the Promises ; 'tis laying down what is certain, and in our power, for somewhat at a distance, and in the dark, whereof we have no other assurance, but that which is founded on the veracity of God, which dependance on his Word, and submission to his Will, without any farther Evidence, must needs be very acceptable and well-pleasing to him.

And when we consider *Fourthly*, That God himself came down from Heaven, out of pure Love and Charity, to give us this new Commandment ; and as he was infinitely perfect and infinitely desirable from all Eternity, no accession of Happiness could accrue to him, that he had not in his own Bosom before, his own unbounded Nature and Essence, containing all the the Variety that can be enjoy'd to all Eternity, it being the nature of Infinity never to be Exhausted ; when we consider this, and that it must be the diffusiveness of his Goodness, and his disinterests'd Love to us, that induc'd him to condescend to wear our poor dress of Flesh and Blood, and to teach us familiarly in our own Nature, by his own Example and ocular Demonstration, which is the plainest way of Instruction ; to go about to do good as he did, how much moreforcibly does this press the exercise of Charity upon us ? And to refine upon this Duty to the last degree, he not only forgave his Enemies, but did them good, and pray'd for them at his very Death ; and his Death and Passion was design'd for their Welfare and Happiness ; and he fell like that Tree that affords Balm to Cure the Wounds of those that cut it down : And when this great light disappear'd, he left Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and all good Men, that after the setting of this Sun, should shine like Stars in the Firma-

ment, to enlighten and direct our Paths, by their Instruction and Example; and this brings me to shew,

*Secondly*, How advantageous and necessary it is, That persons of Rank and Quality, and Fortune should distinguish themselves in this respect.

Liberality is a quality that shews that largeness of Soul, and clearness of Spirit, that is essential to a truly Generous and Noble Person; 'tis by this Temper of Mind that a Man shews himself the Master, and not the Slave of what he possesses; and by holy aspiring after Goodness and Perfection, he gets above himself, makes some approaches and is allied to Divinity: For, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* Remarks, *A Man doing Good is the Image of God, he carries in his Person the Character of the Divinity, for he imitates the greatest and the noblest of the Divine Attributes, that is Mercy and Liberality*; and can any thing reflect a greater honour or lustre on a Man, than thus to aspire and gasp after Goodness, to take such flights towards Heaven, and to perfect his Nature? Persons of Rank and Quality, and Fortune, should be a mighty defence and protection, not only to the Poor and Distress'd, but also to the Injur'd and Oppress'd, they should by the interposeal of their Authority and Credit, ward off, as much as possible, the Violence, and check the Insults and Insolence of wicked Men; and 'tis the best Argument of a greatness of Mind and true Honour, to descend to, and comply with the low Estate of the Poor, to lay by that Pomp and stiffness of Deportment, that as it keeps them at an awful distance, does quite unqualify them for that Familiarity that is necessary to let a Man into their secret Wants and Exigencies; affability, condescension, and obligingness of Humour, are the best marks of an high and exalted Mind, and that disposition and suppleness of Temper that carries a Man to be a Succour to the Afflicted, and to descend to their lowliness and condition, is found to be the most Erect, the least capable of bearing Affronts or  
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Insolence, and is the most ready to spring against Insults and Oppression; the Complexion and Temper of such Men are so uncorrupt, so tender, and so much in the primitive state and purity, that they cannot bear the Wrongs that are oppressive of Human Nature, and men that signaliz'd themselves in this respect, were in the Old World Deify'd and rank'd in the number of Heroes, and distinguishing Marks of Honour were awarded for them, as for those that deserv'd best of Human Nature; and this Honour and profound Respect was paid to the Memory of those Worthies: There is an outward Respect and Ceremony due to the Rank and Quality of a Man, which men study to pay too officiously to the Living, whether deserving or no, perhaps imagining that every such act must please, because it seems to suppose a Worth answerable; tho' perhaps these men only discern a weakness in Great Men, by the means whereof they endeavour to wind themselves into their Favour: But these Men that deserve so well of the Publick, have the real Esteem of the Heart, which puts forth these external Ceremonies with warmth and affection; so that a great and a good Man may have mighty Opportunities of doing good, people are byas'd to receive his Dictates, and to be led by him without a nice enquiry into, and examination of his Actions: Virtue and Goodness are so becoming and fashionable, especially when worn by Great Men, that we are very ready to conform ourselves to them; they lend Piety some Ornaments and Lustre, that other Men have an ambition and curiosity to wear and Mimick; and truly, habits of Virtue, like fine Cloaths upon a right and well shap'd Body, sit gracefully upon an erect and goodly Mind, and are very decent and becoming: And such great Examples and shining Lights carry some authority and power to direct our Paths, which Authority we are inclin'd to follow, and to pay a natural submission to; and the Rhetorick and Eloquence of their Actions, perswade more forcibly than that of their Words and Discourses; either

either because it discovers some new Beauty in Virtue, or teaches the Practice more plainly, or that it smooths and sweetens the Difficulties of it; whether or no these altogether, or any of them, is the cause of the great power and efficacy of Examples, this is certain, That Learning by Examples is most compendious and lively, and that Instruction by Rule and Discourses, is tedious and slow: He that exhorts to, and displays Virtue in its due Colours, must lay out a great deal of time and discourse in describing its Nature and Beauty, and to inspire the Practice of it; but if he lays this plain to the Eye, if he practises himself what he Taught before, he must smooth the way, and clear his Doctrine wonderfully, and he will perform incomparably more by his Example, than by all his Reasoning.

A Man may understand the Art of *Painting* much easier and better, if he see the Artist handle his Pencil, and lay his Colours, and draw the Lines, than if he had taken pains to instruct him in the Rules, and to discover the Secrets of it; we have all that Inclination to imitation and Mimickry, and Examples move and insinuate themselves with such secret Charms and Attractions, that we find by Experience, that we cannot well resist the power and virtue of them, and we begin to act the same things by pure habit and familiarity, without reflection or thought; and living Examples have a Life or Spirit, or whatever you call it, which we desire to Rival and come up to, and which is beyond the Art of Rhetorick or Painter to set forth in due and lively Colours; And besides, the dullest Spectator has the advantage to understand the broad Language of Actions and Examples, when he may be at a loss to trace and discern the Thread of a fine and goodly Discourse; and when he sees the Actions of Men answer and keep close to the warmth of their Words and Language, then is he easily induc'd to believe their conviction and sincerity, and the perswasion they have of the Truth of what they offer; and truly, if we take the Picture  
from

from the Original, when we copy all the living charms and loveliness from living Examples, that represent the Beauties of Virtue in most decent and graceful motion and carriage, they animate it with that spirit and warmth that makes it look Natural, then Virtue walks in our own Dress, and so lays a more lively and deeper impression upon us, and recommends it self in its most endearing comeliness, and agreeable gestures; but Virtue drawn from Precepts and Discourse is a transcript and copy, the statue and picture of a living Example, and is languid for want of that air, and life and motion that inspirits the former; and in a word, Virtue in Example does much more charmingly endear it self, than the most Rhetorical Descriptions of it, and is as much above the most lively Discourse and finish't Panegyrick upon it, as the Creator is above the Painter, or Nature and the Original above Art and the Picture: Since therefore Examples have all this power and efficacy, and that we have generally a secret itch and desire to ape Grandeur, when we cannot attain to it, how mighty advantagious and necessary is it that persons of Rank and Quality and Fortune should be shining Examples, a Spectacle set on High, that people may copy after these Originals, that such Patterns should be set in a true Light, that others may the more advantagiously take and draw from them all the Beauties and Features of Virtue and Goodness. And if the Nobility and Gentry, and Men of Fortune of our County, degenerate not from the Ancient Glory of their Ancestors; if the brightness of their Examples serve not to Illustrate our shame, what a strong Tye and Obligation have we to out-shine others in Religious Duties, in Pious and Charitable Actions? Our County, in *Cæsar's* time, as Historians tell us, was accounted the Civilest among the *Britains*, not Conquer'd, but Compounded with by the *Romans*, and, as if Providence had design'd us peculiar Favours, we are so scituated by Nature, that we seem to be planted to receive more, especially the benefit of Commerce

and

and Traffick with other Countries : And this conveniency occasion'd the Importing the richest of Commodities, and greatest Blessing, the Christian Religion into our County ; the day-Light from on High first shed it self there, and the light of the Gospel was cherish'd and encouraged by *Ethelbert*, King of *Kent*, Anno 596. and long before this, *Kent* had receiv'd the Faith ; for it is Recorded, That *Lucius* the first *British* King in this Island, built a Church to the name and service of Christ, within the Castle of *Dover*, and plentifully Endow'd the same ; and if our fore-Fathers had the privilege to be Witnesses of the first Dawning of the Gospel, to receive the first warmth and springing Light of it ? if they did so encourage and establish the Church ; if they built it upon a Rock, against which, tho' the Wind rose and the Waves beat, it was safe and unshaken, because it was well founded ; if this was their Privilege and great Advantage beyond the rest of this Island ; and if this their gratitude and return to God for such a peculiar Favour ; and if they have devolv'd and entail'd these Blessings upon us, with new accessions of Purity and Advantage to Religion ; how deeply are we Indebted ? with how many years Interest are we incumber'd ? and what a Fund and Bank for Piety and Charity are we oblig'd to make, to discharge the Dues and Ar-rears owing from us, for the primitive Purity and increase of the Gospel Light among us ? and if the Saints above, our Pious Predecessors, the Founders and Patrons of Christianity in our County, have any sense of what we are doing this day ; if they are made Privy to or concern'd at the behaviour of us their Friends and Country-Men here below ; or, if (as some are of Opinion) according to the Influence of their good and bad Works, the departed feel an increase or abatement of Joy or Torment in the other World ; then what a new accession of Happiness and Bliss, what new Raptures of Joy and delight may we suppose to break in upon them ? and when they rise up to the highest key and top  
of

of Heavenly satisfaction, what Complacency must they then take in the Designs and Offices of this Day? And if there be Joy in Heaven, at the Conversion of a Sinner; Sure there must be a more Intense, a more rais'd Sublime delight at the Improvement of Virtue, when Persons meet to set their Heads together, and contrive to do good, when so many great and good Men join themselves in Holy Confederacies, to project and devise Liberal things, to cast about how to be always doing good, how to make their Charity most lasting; and most useful, and this leads me to shew

*Thirdly*, What a great Improvement of the Grace of Charity it is to enter into Societies, for the devising of Liberal things.

If the universal disposition of every single Man to do good to all Men, and the shining example of each great Person in his private Capacity, be so commendable in this respect as I have represented to you, what a mighty improvement of Charity must it be, to Unite into Artificial Bodies and Societies, not only to give new strength and power, but also a sort of Immortality and Perpetuity to this Grace amongus: The Original Institution and design of Civil Bodies began from the exigencies and necessities of private Men, their divided power was too slight and feeble to defend or promote their own or the common good, and at best there was this defect in the state of Nature, that altho' one Man might have followed the light and direction of right Reason, and might have acted according to the Law Impress'd and Engraven on his Mind, yet his rectitude and equity were subject to Mortality, and no Man could promise himself that his next Heir or Successor should not swerve from this Law, or that he should not invade the Right and Priviledge of another: But Bodies Politick do provide against these flaws and deficiencies, they are Deathless and Perpetual, and if a Branch chance to be Lopt off, there sprouts up another in its room,

and there is a continual supply of Mortality, the Vital heat and warmth continues, and the Heart is suppos'd to be still sound and free from Change and Disease, and from Death it self; and therefore when People make Holy Leagues and Confederacies, and reinforce and strengthen their Charity by their United Power; and by Custom and Example, at least enjoin and entail this equally with their Estate, upon Posterity, they procure a lasting Duration, and a sort of Eternity to it; And since such Communities are as one Body inspir'd and mov'd by the same Life, since they breath the same Spirit of Love and Amity, and if general and publick Judgments and Calamities pursue general and publick Vices in a Country or Nation, as 'tis observ'd they always do, how do such Bodies of Men, not only Ensure the Community, but also stand in the Gap, and procure Blessings to a Country and People? their Virtues will very perswasively exhortate with God, and so many Righteous Men are sufficient to atone for, and to ward off Wengenance from a Nation.

But beside this lasting advantage of entering into Societies, for the devising of Liberal things for the Body, at all times, and in all places expedient and necessary; there is more particularly in this Age, a pressing Inducement to perswade us to enter into Holy Alliances and Confederacies, for the devising of Liberal things for the Soul too.

Atheism, Irreligion and Prophaneness are openly avow'd and profess'd; and Men Ambitious of surprizing the World, with somewhat that is daring or new, or uncommon, desire to be noted and observ'd; and endeavour to signalize themselves by Singularity, and laying memorable Impressions on their Hearers; this is the common Topick of Men of Pride and Haughtiness of Spirit, they break out into some flashy Jests, and study to dazzle by the sprightliness of their Wit and Fancy on this occasion: They are always upon new Enquiries, and for having their Phenomena's in Religion laid

laid before the Company, that they may have some opportunity to shew their Ingenuity, to convince them of the clearness of their Senses, and the penetration of their Judgment; that they may let them understand that they have discover'd that long hidden Fallacy of Religion, that they have lookt thro' the deceitful Mystery, and by a particular acuteness of Spirit, found out the Politick Cheat, and penetrated the last and abstrusest recesses of it: And in a word, that they are Wiser than the greatest Men of this Age, and all that went before it; and these sort of Men have got to such a head, and are grown so numerous, that they draw up into Parties, and use all their Skill and Discipline to attack us openly; and when they meet some of little Learning, and mean Capacity, scatter'd and unprovided, they seldom lose the opportunity of setting upon such unequal Matches, with Shew and Solemnity, and of plying them vigorously, till by their weakness they have obtain'd the Victory, in which they Glory and Insult with Insolence and Clamor, which sufficiently convinces, that their design is only to Triumph in their own Abilities, and like Mountebanks on a Stage, to raise Trophies of their own Conduct and Capacities: But since many of these Men are otherwise, Persons that generally make some Figure in the World, and such as the sprightliness of their Blood and Youth, as well as their Fortune and Education have flush'd to fly at some things above the common level, such who upon the account of their Birth or Station deserve some Deference, and who are therefore sufficient to gain some Reputation and Modishness to Irreligion and Prophaneness; I think it highly necessary, that Men of Rank and Quality, of Fashion and Authority should muster their United Forces, should Marshal and Discipline, and draw them up to receive and repulse so pernicious an Enemy; and when we are thus prepared to Encounter our Enemy, when we are thus begirt with the Armour of Righteousness, the Courage and Countenance of our Enemy will

be ready to fall by our forwardness; and when they find their number and quality inferior to us, 'twill quite break their expectation and measures; and when we shall have thus, like the true Church Militant, shock't and discomfited our Enemies, let us always use the Victory with moderation and temper, let not the Conquest be shewy and vain, lest they rally their Forces, and return out of regret and revenge to their old Opinions: But above all, let it be provided that our Adversaries have it fairly hinted and press'd upon them, and let our Actions convince the Truth of it, That the Principle by which we are acted, is that of true Love and hearty Affection to Mankind.; and when we have thus reduc'd our Enemy to some Reason, when we have sweetn'd and calm'd him by our easy carriage and candor to him, it may not be unseasonable to model and dispose him to receive our Impressions, and so by our kind conduct and management, to win and engage him to our Party; 'tis a mighty Advantage to gain Number and Credit to an Opinion: It often happens, That when Men of a lower rank and sphere, and whose smaller number renders them yet more despicable and insufficient, encounter those of much an higher order and condition, that they are somewhat dazled and dash'd at their splendour, they sink the lower, by a fanciful sense of their own meanness, and then grow giddy with looking up at them; hence it is sometimes, that Men conform themselves to their Humour, agree to their Sentiments, and out of a sort of Modesty and Deference to their number and quality, seem to submit to their Judgments and Authority, and subscribe their Opinions, how un-Orthodox soever. Since these Men of manners, these Men of Effeminacy and Cowardize indeed, that dare not follow the Captain of their Salvation, maugre the opposition the Pomp of the World can give them, there is need of Quality, Fashion and Number, to keep such Men in Countenance, to animate them

to do their Duty, and to behave themselves manfully in the face of their Enemy; and to do this perswasively, to retrieve and recover the ground and credit that Religion hath lately lost in the World, 'twill be necessary, That Men of Quality, Fashion and Fortune should espouse her Cause warmly, in publick Places and in Company, the common Stages whereon the Adversaries of it display their vain Philosophy.

I mean not that Men of Virtue, and such as have a regard for Religion, should force this unseasonably, and prescribe it as an Entertainment to the Company; but I would have them by some Intimations of their Mind, and Inclinations at least, bespeak the good Behaviour of those they Converse with, and obviate the Affronts that are usually done to God and Religion, in common Conversation; and what is this, but to *let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven*: And this is to devise Liberal Things for the Souls of Men, to reclaim which, and to minister to their most distressed Condition at such a time, is the truest Compassion, and highest degree of Charity we can do them; by which means we shall strike in with His Majesties late Proclamation against Atheism, Irreligion and Profaneness: and let the World, to the eternal Honour of our County, see we make it our study to execute aright his Royal Will, and Gracious Directions; and to lend him in this (as we have in every thing else) our utmost Assistance in promoting the Glory of God, and the publick Welfare of this Nation: Then can that Complaint never be justly made of us, that the Prophet *Isaiah* makes of those that met to Feast together in his time, *That the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe and wind are in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands*, cap. 5. verse 12.

But

But there remains one principal Advantage of entering into *Societies*, not yet spoken to, the blessing of mutual Friendship: 'tis true, we are enjoyn'd to bear an universal love and kindness to all Men, and the propension of our very Nature leans that way, but though this holy Fire is never to be extinguish'd, yet may it burn more fervently, and warm some more kindly than others; it ought indeed to have its degrees, it ought to be more intense or remiss, with respect to some than others: Nature and Alliance, Virtue and Merit claim the greatest share of our Affections; Prudence and the dictates of right Reason, enforce and recommend this more powerfully; Wisdom and Counsel command us to look about, and to examine whom we admit into our Bosom and Affections, into our Secrets and Favour: But when we have once determin'd our Choice, when Nature and Kindred, Country and Neighbourhood; but above all, Virtue and Descent fix our election, then our Love and Friendship are laid on a sure Foundation, we contract much of the expanded and dilated Fire, and it burns more ardently and affectionately within the compass of our Friendship. Love indeed is the primitive Foundation, and true Cement of all Societies; and when this Fire grew feeble and weak, cool and indifferent in the World, there was a necessity to recruit it, and minister Fuel to the dying Cynders: 'tis therefore that Laws were made to draw Men into Corporations and Societies, where they might live in dependance, and expect Succours of one another, but these are but subsidiary helps to repair that Love and Friendship so much decay'd in the World; and these are miserable shifts, which lay a constraint upon Men, and do secure only the overt-act. But when Friendships and Societies are cemented together by Love and Nature, by Virtue and true Election, there Affection becomes regular and steady, because the Reason on which they are founded, affords constant Charms and Attraction:

tractions: And because even this Celestial Fire has gone, and may go out again, 'tis not the least important Concern of our present Meeting, to stir up the old Sparks and Cynders of it, to commence and enter into new Friendships, and to cherish and inflame the Hearts and Affections of one another; and though our Friendship is so disinterested and free, that it has little in view beside the prospect of doing good, and enjoying the sweets and delights of true Amity, yet it is accompanied with other Blessings and Advantages; and tho' we feel nothing but pleasure spread over our Hearts, in the company and conversation of our Country-Men and Friends, yet there is somewhat else of Moment that we lightly pass over, without observing it.

For besides this Feast of the Mind, there is another mighty Advantage arising from Friendship; 'tis a Guard and a mighty Defence to us too. The Son of *Syrach* tells us, Eccles. 6. 14. 16. *That a faithful friend is a strong defence, or medicine of life, and he that findeth him findeth a great treasure.* And this brings me to shew,

*Fourthly*, and lastly, The Liberal Man's Reward, by *Liberal things he shall stand*, or be establish'd; or, in the Gospel sense, *the merciful shall receive mercy.*

The best and surest way of establishing or securing of any Man or Society, is by engaging the Affections of those in whose power it may be to offer Violence to either; this is the method of Nature, this the Primitive Charm whereby it drew Men together, and captivated and united their Hearts: this is it that in in the Primitive state superseded the use of all Laws and Constraints; which, as they were compulsive of doing good Offices, as they forc'd and blew up the languid decaying fire of our Love and Affections, took off so much from the freedom of the Will, and excellency of the Virtue, on which alone the hap-

happinefs of Men and Societies is founded and establish'd; and what more effectual courfe of reftoring this Law and Virtue to its primitive Excellence and Freedom, than by Liberality and Benifcence; the Charms and Attractions of this Virtue are fo powerful, that the Affections are not only invited and sweetned, but irrefiftibly drawn and captivated by them; we lay fome Debt or Incumbrance on the perfon oblig'd, which Nature is inclin'd to acquit it felf of, 'tis a Burthen and Weight, and it feems to be in fome pain till it eafes it felf of the preffure: Liberty is fo natural, that we are impell'd by the Springs of our very Conftitution, to Ransom and Enfranchise our felves, by making at leaft an exchange or return of the Obligation; we are but too fenfible of anothers right to us, of our own flavery and dependance, when he loads us with Obligations and Favours; and we are naturally inclin'd to regain the property of our Selves, and to rife again to the common Level; and even our very Enemies, by the warmth of our love and kindnefs, by our heaping Coals of fire on their Heads, may have their hard Tempers fweetly dispos'd, and foftned and melted down: And tho' I could infift longer on this, and evince clearly, and exemplify plainly, That the very animal Nature is difpofed and carried on to Acts of Gratitude; yet do I chufe rather not to tranfgrefs too much on your Patience, but to proceed.

And fince by Liberality and Benifcence, the love and affections of Men, which is the principal Foundation and beft Security of Societies, are fweetly engag'd, and that Society and true Friendfhip united in Charity, is as a ftrong Fort and Cittadel againft our Enemies. I think it plainly appears, That devifing *liberal things* is the beft means and fureft method, to ftand, or be establish'd in this World; and fince I have, in the former part of this Difcourfe, laid before you the Spiritual Promifes made to the

the Liberal or Charitable Man, I hope it will no more be doubted, but that he will stand or be establish'd in the next World too; or, that *the merciful shall receive mercy.*

To sum up all:

You have heard what Liberality is, and what it is to devise Liberal Things: you have heard what Obligations, Instinct and meer Animal motion, Reason, Revelation, and the Example of our Saviour, do lay upon us to be Liberal and Charitable: you have heard how advantagious and necessary it is, That persons of Rank and Quality, of Fashion and Fortune should distinguish themselves in this respect; and in a particular manner, what strong Tyes and Obligations the Nobility, Gentry, and Men of Fortune of our County have to out-shine others in Religious Duties, in Pious and Charitable Actions; you have heard what a great Improvement of the Grace of Charity it is to enter into Societies, for the devising of Liberal Things, not only as it respects the Bodies, but also the Souls of Men: you have heard lastly, the Liberal Mans Reward, how that by Liberal Things he shall stand, or be establish'd in this World, and that which is to come.

And this, I doubt not, will be sufficient to make you stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in *these* Works of the Lord: To conclude therefore,

May the honour of God; and benefit of Mankind, be the Spring of all your Actions and Devices.

May your SOCIETY long continue an Ornament to our Own, and a shining Example to other Counties.

May the Indigent, the Fatherless and Widows, find occasion of Rejoycing from your Christian Entertainment.

May no Excess or Intemperance, no Discord or Divisions, give a just cause of Offence, or occasion of Interrupting your *Agape*, or Feasts of Love.

E

May

ed May your Entertainment serve to Warm your Affec-  
 tions, and to cherish and Raise your Friendship;  
 And, as the Wise Man hath it, *May you eat your bread*  
*with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart,* Eccles. 9.  
 verse 7.

And, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, may all  
 be done to the praise and glory of God.

And, May you all, after a long and innocent Enjoy-  
 ment of each others Society in this World, be Tran-  
 slated to the Blessed Company of Just Men made  
 Perfect in that which is to come. Amen.

## F I N I S.

Age 34 line 22 read Law and Gospel, p. 18. l. 18. r. vengeance. ib. l. 23. r. il-  
 lustrati. p. 19. l. 3. r. sense. p. 21. l. 32. r. wine. p. 22. l. 17. r. desert.

## A D E V E R T I S E M E N T S.

A Sermon Preach'd before their Majesties K. William  
 and Q. Mary's Forces, at Cambray in Flanders, the Sun-  
 day before they march'd into the Camp, 1694. By the  
 same Author.

Peace and Gratitude. A Sermon Preached before the  
 Honourable Society of the Masters of the Church of Men-  
 November 23<sup>d</sup> 1697. By Wm. Mary le Beau, Londonian.  
 Samuel Prae, D. D. chaplain to his Highness, William Duke  
 of Gloucester, Printed for John Back (Bookseller in the City  
 Honourable Society) at the Black Boy on London Bridge.